CLEAN VERSION

In the Specification:

Replace page 1, second paragraph with the following:

Recently a new way of franking mailpieces to evidence payment has been developed and introduced by the assignee of the subject invention in accordance with the Information Based Indicia Program (IBIP) of the U.S. Postal Service. Unlike previous forms of proof of payment such as stamps and postage meter indicia, IBIP indicia do not rely on details of the printing process to provide security but instead incorporate encrypted information unique to each indicium which cannot be produced without knowledge of secret cryptographic keys. IBIP indicia have many advantages. For example, the information incorporated into the indicia not only provides security against counterfeit indicia, but allows the Postal Service to more closely track its operations and the needs of its customers. A particular advantage of IBIP and similar indicia is that, because they do not rely upon particular details of the printing process for security, mailers can print indicia themselves with a conventional digital printer. The Assignee of the subject invention has recently introduced a service under the trade name CLICKSTAMP® ONLINE which enables mailers to print IBIP type indicia using their own digital printers.

Replace page 5, third paragraph with the following:

ERC 10/24/03

Figure 2 shows mailpiece 22, also referred to herein as envelope 22, which is printed with indicium I in a conventional manner. Envelope ~~23~~ 22 functions as a substrate for printing indicium I, which consists of three portions: human readable portion HR, which contains data such as the postage amount and date in human readable form, graphic portion G which contains graphics such as a service provider logo or mailer advertisement and, encrypted portion 2DBC which contains encrypted data used to securely evidence payment of postage in a known manner as described above. Typically the encrypted data will be in a two dimensional bar code format such as the well known PDF 417 format.

Replace page 5, fourth paragraph that ends on page 6 with the following:

Q3

Envelope 22 has width W and height H and right and upper edges 22R and 22U. Envelope 22 also has a fixed reserved clear area F. In accordance with Postal Service regulations reserved clear area F is a distance d1 from edge 22R, has width d2 and height d5, and lies along edge 22U.

Replace page 6, second paragraph with the following:

Q4

From the width W and height H of envelope 22 and characteristics of printer 14, driver 19 determines an unprintable area 26 in which system 10, as configured, cannot print and a complementary printable area 25. In the prior art, indicium I is positioned for printing in the upper right corner of envelope 22 at predetermined minimum distances from edges 22R and 22U in accordance with Postal Service regulations. As unprintable area 26 becomes greater than these minimum dimensions the position of indicium I is shifted down and to the left, remaining in the upper right corner of printable area 25. Since width d3 of portion HR is preferably chosen less then distance d1, and height d4 is preferably chosen greater than or equal to height d5, for a range of sizes for unprintable area 26 indium I will not overlap reserved clear area F. (Note that for other system configurations, unprintable area 26 can also extend along the left and/or lower edges of envelope 22 but since this does not substantially affect the embodiments described here this does not need to be discussed here.)

Replace page 6, second paragraph with the following:

Q5

Figure 3 shows the possible effects of a change in system configuration; typically either a change in characteristics of printer 14 or in the dimensions of envelope 22. New unprintable area 27 and printable area 29 are determined and positioning indicium I in the upper right corner of printable area 29 causes portion HR to overlap the FIM mark in reserved clear area F.